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Transparency at long last from the DfE

JOHN DICKENS @JOHNDICKENSSW

The government is set to lift a veil of secrecy over academy spending in a transparency drive that will reveal reported frauds, and uncover who the highest-paid chief executives are, how much they are paid and how much trusts spend on consultants.

The education select committee this week published a "dry run" of a new-look government report that will reveal national figures relating to academy spend for the first time.

The first official report will be published next year, but the interim report published this week has revealed:

- More than 100 academy chiefs are paid more than £150,000
- Academies have paid out golden handshakes totalling £52 million
 - two of which were at least £150,000
- > Auditors are flagging more concerns over significant issues in

academy accounts



P14

WHY I WANTED TO SORT OUT THE DODGY SCHOOL

TUESDAY HUMBY

SCHOOLS WEEK

EDITION 83

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DfE to reveal what's going on in academy books

JOHN DICKENS CONTINUED @JOHNDICKENSSW FROM FRONT

NEWS

While the figures for academy trusts are available in individual accounts, this is the first time collated statistics for the whole sector will be published in one document. The move should go some way to appeasing academy critics as the number of

high-profile scandals in the sector grows. The government has said the new report will allow parliament to keep tabs on trends

in academy spend and performance. But Conservative MP and education committee chair Neil Carmichael said the government still must "do more to demonstrate its commitment to accountability" for the £18 billion academy bill. The committee is currently investigating academy finances.

Carmichael wants ministers to publish further details about the costs of private finance initiative (PFI) payments and to name philanthropists making large donations to trusts.

In a letter to the Department for Education permanent secretary Jonathan Slater, he wrote: "Overall, we remain to be convinced that the revised arrangements will provide an adequate level of transparency and accountability of the

department's expenditure on academies." The government will also provide details of reported frauds in the sector and name academy chiefs paid more than £150,000.

Academy spend on consultancy fees and controversial off-payroll arrangements will also be published.

News of the report came on the same day that a long-awaited financial investigation into the Bright Tribe academy trust was published.

The report, which Education Funding Agency (EFA) boss Peter Lauener admitted had only been published because of significant media interest - including from Schools Week – found the trust had breached rules over related-party transactions.

But it said that instead of being issued a financial notice to improve, the government was taking a "holistic" approach

Bright Tribe was one of five trusts named as a "top-performing" sponsor by the government last year and handed a slice of £5 million to improve standards in northern schools.

Another of those trusts, the Wakefield City academies trust, is also under investigation. As in the Bright Tribe case, the DfE refused a Freedom of Information

request by Schools Week for a copy of the report.

But a leaked draft copy, seen by The Times Educational Supplement, found the DfE had "extreme concern" over the chain paving its interim chief executive more than £82,000 for 15 weeks' work.

The move to a new-look sector report follows scathing criticism from the education committee and the National Audit Office over how the department had failed to properly account for spending by academies.

The spending watchdog said the "truth and fairness" of the department's 2014-15 accounts could not be verified because of "misstatement and uncertainty".

Most of these issues relate to consolidating thousands of academy accounts that have different reporting periods to the DfE and its agencies, such as the EFA

The government has plans to rectify this over the coming years and the new report is part of its plan to get its house in order.

A DfE spokesperson said: "All academies operate under a strict system of financial oversight and accountability - more robust than in council-run schools. Where issues are identified we can and do take direct action '

We'd like a tutor-proof 11-plus if possible, says Gibb

FREDDIE WHITTAKER **@FCDWHITTAKER**

The establishment of a tutor-proof 11-plus test is the "holy grail" for grammar schools, savs Nick Gibb

The schools minister told MPs on the education select committee that developing a test for academic selection at 11 that could not be influenced by private tutoring was a government aim and something grammar schools across the country were already "trving to do".

The minister was called to give evidence to the MPs as part of the scrutiny process for the government's consultation on reintroducing grammar schools.

Many commentators say the 11-plus favours the children of parents who can afford private tutoring.

When asked if it was possible to produce a tutor-proof test, Gibb said: "That would be the holy grail.

"It is something we're consulting on. We want to receive evidence from specialists in this area. but ultimately it is not the only factor that is preventing children from disadvantaged backgrounds from going to grammar schools."

Professor Anna Vignoles, from the University of Cambridge, said it would be "extremely difficult" to create any such test. When asked if teacher-assessment, rather than test-based scores, might help, she added: "Anything that involves teacher, parental or own choice is likely to exacerbate not improve the social mix."

The Department for Education's chief scientist, Tim Leunig, admitted that it would



be possible to "level the playing field" on the 11-plus by introducing different pass marks for pupils on free school meals, as pass marks already varied depending on birth month (thresholds are lower for pupils born later in the academic year).

"It wouldn't be guite as easy in the case of poverty because a poor family can still, if they are determined, find that money [for private tutoring], but you can go a long way ... without a tutor-proof test."

Last year. Schools Week revealed how a test purported by some politicians to be "tutor-proof" had bagged its creators more than £1 million, but had made little difference to the number of state school primary pupils accessing secondary grammars.

Dr Susan Stothard, head of assessment development at CEM - the company that developed the tests - said they were developed to minimise the impact of

"additional coaching".

During the committee sessions, Gibb also clashed with MPs who questioned the need for new grammars in what he described as an improving comprehensive school system.

"We don't have these secondary moderns that provide a very poor-quality education, we now have a system where 85 per cent of comprehensive schools are good or outstanding," he said.

"So the consequence of not going to one of these selective schools is you will go to a very good comprehensive."

When asked why grammars were needed if comprehensives were better than before. Gibb insisted that he wanted to see a "very high-guality academic education" in all schools. He hoped the introduction of more grammars would "change attitudes" towards the academic curriculum promoted by the government through policies such as the EBacc

oesa BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

NEWS Plea to 'come clean' on teaching service

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Ministers must "come clean" over recruitment figures for a landmark scheme to parachute elite teachers into struggling schools, say union leaders, as questions swirl around the scheme two months before its launch.

The government is yet to reveal how many applications it has received for the National Teaching Service (NTS) scheme aimed at tackling recruitment issues by luring experienced teachers into underperforming schools.

Launched a few months before the general election in 2015 by then schools minister David Laws as a "secondment" scheme, the NTS was relaunched by former education secretary Nicky Morgan after the election.

It is believed that not enough teachers have signed up for the programme but *Schools Week* can now exclusively reveal that Morgan pushed on several occasions to publish the figures earlier this year.

Internal emails between ministers and top civil servants, seen by this newspaper, show Morgan wanted to be "upfront" about the number of recruits.

The department has given no explanation as to why this was not followed through.

Mary Bousted (pictured), general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Leaders, said: "The NTS was heralded as the big initiative that was going to tackle the teaching shortage in deprived areas.

"It's a worthwhile idea, but we need to know what's going on and whether taxpayers' money has resulted in a launchable scheme."

The NTS offers up to £10,000 for teachers or middle leaders with at least three years' experience to relocate to struggling schools.

The deadline for applications was extended at least twice – with *Schools Week* reporting in May that few teachers had been found. One source suggested the number was in single digits.

The scheme was due to launch a pilot cohort in September, but that has been pushed back to January.

Heavily redacted internal emails obtained by *Schools Week* after a Freedom of Information request, show an email from Morgan's private secretary, sent to ministers and senior civil servants in May, in which she said she was "clear that in our response we should be on the front foot".

She suggested publishing a statement in the Commons to be "upfront"

about the number of applicants. Another email in June, with the subject line "second application round for NTS", reveals she wanted to make a statement before the summer recess, with "final numbers likely to be ready mid-July".

Another email in July repeated this, adding that a news story should be developed to coincide with releasing the figures "before or during recess".

Despite freedom of information requests and parliamentary questions from MPs, the government has continued to refuse to divulge how many applications it has received or to explain why it has changed tack about publishing figures.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "It would be helpful if the government was open about how many people have applied to become part of the NTS."

The concept was a "good one", but "if it is not delivering, we must ask why. One clear answer is that there is just not enough teachers in the system, and too many are leaving the profession.

"The government needs to be honest about the current recruitment crisis."

In a press release last January, Morgan said the government had received hundreds of "expressions of interest" in the scheme. She said NTS would deliver 1,500 of the country's top teaching talent to the

most in-need schools by 2020. A Department for Education spokesperson pointed *Schools Week* to a comment by schools minister Nick Gibb in October that said matching teachers to roles was "ongoing" and that, once the process had concluded, the number of withdrawals and cost of the pilot would be released

THE HIDDEN PROGRAMMES THAT GIVE 'VALUE FOR MONEY'

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN

Justine Greening says the education department does not know which school interventions are "value for money", but her plans for social opportunity areas are set to resolve that.

During a speech at an event in London to celebrate the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) fifth anniversary, the education secretary said she wanted to put "value for money at the heart" of Department for Education (DfE) actions but lacked the information to do so.

"A simple question I always want to answer is if I had one more pound, where should it go? Right now I don't have a sufficiently broad evidence base to answer that."

She added: "The data we have could be much, much better. We need to have a more careful look at how we can embed evidence into the core of how the department works more broadly on a day-to-day basis and how actually, dare I say, we can embed it more into a business-based approach...in terms of where we put our chips and where we follow the evidence of what works."

Over the past five years the EEF has received £75 million funding from the DfE and run 127 school research projects.

Recent "value for money" studies include the parent engagement project, which found texting parents about upcoming tests and homework deadlines could boost secondary school pupils' maths results by an extra month of learning.

At a cost of £6 a year for each pupil, the EEF suggested it was a "straightforward and cost effective" way to improve performance.

Greening said there were "a lot of good" programmes run by the EEF that she wanted to roll out in her "opportunity areas".

The education secretary announced in October during the Conservative party conference that £60 million would be spent on school improvement, teacher support and other schemes in six social mobility "coldspots" – Blackpool, Derby, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough and West Somerset.

She said last week that she wanted to roll out some of the EEF's projects in those areas if research suggested they would make a difference – therefore enabling the department to have a better grasp on what worked in different locations.

"The role of embedding research in opportunity areas is something we are really keen to do. Many of those disadvantaged places haven't changed over years and we know they won't change overnight, but what we can start to do is unpick the problems and bare down on those problems.

"I'm looking at how we can get a whole roster of people who want to work with us then we can reach out to the right areas with right projects."

Exclusive

A networking and events group aimed at encouraging more black, Asian and ethnic minority candidates into teaching and headship roles will launch in January.

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

BAMEed aims to emulate the success of the recently launched WomenEd and "raise the status" of teaching among communities from ethnic minority backgrounds by encouraging progression up the career ladder.

Co-founder Allana Gay, assistant headteacher at Pooles Park primary school in north London, said she and colleagues were dismayed when the 2015 school workforce data showed 93.4 per cent of headteachers were white British – a larger percentage than the 87 per cent of white British classroom teachers.

"When we looked at the census, to be honest, we began to wonder about our chances of headship. And for me that's also an issue of representation for students. It limits an understanding of diversity. If I'm an ethnic minority child inside a school, and most of the diversity I see is among assistants and cleaners, that's a problem."

Teachers with Pakistani heritage made up 1 per cent of all teachers in England, as did those with black Caribbean backgrounds. In contrast, 3.8 per cent of teaching assistants have a black Caribbean background, and 4.3 per cent have Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Indian backgrounds.

New group to boost status of ethnic minority teachers

Meanwhile, just 1.3 per cent of headteachers are from south Asian backgrounds overall, and 0.9 from a black African or Caribbean background. Yet 30.4 per cent of primary students and 26.6 per cent of secondary students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The government's census does not include details on teachers from traveller or gypsy backgrounds, nor from smaller ethnic groups such as Turks or Eastern Europeans.

"A school needs to reflect its local area, too," Gay said. "We need more Turkish teachers. And if I live in Sheffield, we need more black and Chinese teachers. What we want to avoid is a monoculture in schools."

Gay, who came to England in 2002 from Trinidad, said the lack of salaried training posts posed a problem for migrant teachers.

"It also depends on how you recruit – if it's just through Schools Direct, and there aren't many salaried posts, then some people will be limited by that. If you come to this country you

have to have a salaried job." The situation is also becoming more stringent, as from April 1 non-EU nationals are expected to show they are earning a salary of at least £35,000 a year to stay in the UK for longer than six years.

Co-founder Amjad Ali (pictured), assistant headteacher at Cheney secondary school in Oxfordshire, said in the new year BAMEed would launch an annual conference and networking events, as well as provide support with applications for teaching and leadership roles through a new website and coaching scheme.

The government did not publish data on the ethnic backgrounds of applications for teaching jobs, meaning it was impossible to see how many were successful and rejected, Ali said.

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run into six figures. In the case of School

school's costs - as well as its own.

biased.

secret of it".

female gender", but

the segregation

Ofsted plans

Angela Sandhal

to appeal.

Mr Justice Jay claimed

there was no evidence

disadvantaged girls.

X. Ofsted has been told it must pay half the

School X argued it was unfairly singled out by Ofsted and the inspection was

Mr Justice Jay dismissed these claims

The ruling stated the school's "parallel

characteristics and [the school made] no

"reinforced notions of inferiority within the

in a ruling published on Tuesday. But

gender streams" were its "defining

Ofsted claimed the segregation

he upheld the school's claim that it was not breaking the law by segregating pupils.

NEWS Judges order Ofsted to amend critical report

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW Exclusive

Ofsted has been ordered to amend a critical inspection report after the High Court ruled the watchdog had mistakenly claimed segregating pupils was against the law.

Documents seen exclusively by Schools Week also reveal that Ofsted has faced 13 judicial reviews in the past three years – with legal experts claiming more schools are challenging its decisions through the courts.

An Islamic faith-based school, known as "School X" as it cannot be named for legal reasons, won its claim over gender separation after going to court over an inspection that placed it in special measures.

The school successfully argued that pupil segregation was not discriminatory, as claimed by Ofsted.

It previously won an injunction banning publication of the report, but the High Court hearing found Ofsted was correct to issue an "inadequate" grade.

The watchdog can now publish the

LEGAL COSTS COULD RUN INTO SIX FIGURES

report, but references to segregation breaking the law must be omitted.

Figures exclusively obtained by Schools Week detailing the 13 reviews show that just one resulted in a grade being overturned (see box below) – despite schools spending tens of thousands of pounds on legal action.

Angela Sandhal, an education solicitor at law firm Atherton Godfrey, said Ofsted's "ineffective" complaints procedure was pushing schools into the courts.

But she warned schools could only challenge a procedural irregularity, not an inspector's judgment. "Bad inspections



cause irreparable reputational damage. But is it worth risking these funds – or just wait for a re-inspection?"

Ofsted spent at least £60,000 defending judicial review claims, although this only included costs for counsel, not the cost of in-house legal advisers.

It also does not include costs for all the cases. One legal expert told *Schools Week* that costs for full judicial reviews could

OFSTED COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Schools can go through Ofsted's three-stage complaints procedure if they are unhappy with an inspection.

However, annual accounts for 2014-15 show that of 327 "step 3" complaints (the most severe), just four resulted in overturned judgments.

Former inspector Andrew Morrish, now chief executive of Victoria academies trust, which runs six primaries, said he understood the frustrations and concerns of schools, but added: "Heads generally understand that the rule of professional opinion is deeply embedded – we can live with that, providing the inspection is fair."

The watchdog introduced a new scrutiny panel as part of the complaints procedure this year. It now includes an independent representative from the sector.

Ofsted did not respond to a request for comment. But writing in April, Sean Harford, national director for education at the watchdog, said the change provided "greater clarity and explanation of the outcomes and reasons for them"

THE INSPECTION THAT GOT OVERTURNED

The only education establishment to overturn an Ofsted grade through the courts in the past three years is the Old Co-operative day nursery, in Nottinghamshire.

In October the High Court ordered Ofsted to delete a published "inadequate" inspection.

The nursery was rated "outstanding" just seven months before the "inadequate" grade that followed an inspection sparked by a parent complaint that a child had momentarily walked into the road during a staff-supervised walk.

But Mr Justice Coulson, in his ruling, said it was a "rogue inspection and report". He said the inspector's failure to consider the nursery's inspection history was "irrational".

Five nurseries have challenged their grades through the courts, compared with three schools, one independent school and one parent. Details for the remaining cases have not been disclosed.

Two claims are ongoing.

SCHOOLS WEEK STAFF ON AWARD SHORTLISTS

The *Schools Week* reporting team is again in the running for a series of prestigious journalism awards.

Chief reporter John Dickens, political reporter Freddie Whittaker and reporter Billy Camden are all shortlisted for a CIPR Education journalism award, set to take place on November 17.

Camden is nominated for the outstanding newcomer award for his stories showing issues of reliability among the baseline assessments and exclusively revealing the government would abandon the multi-million pound policy.

Whittaker is again up for outstanding further and vocational education reporting, in which he came second last year, and Dickens is nominated for outstanding national journalism.

Dickens also secured a nomination for the British journalism awards, which are open to all news organisations. His investigations into education's philanthropists, poorly performing private schools and the impact of PFI contracts, gained him a spot on the specialist journalist award shortlist alongside staff from *The Times* and the BBC. Results are announced on December 6.

More primary test errors 'probable', investigation finds

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

An investigation into the Standards and Testing Agency following the leak of primary test papers online has found resource constraints and a "defensive and silo culture" at the organisation.

It also warned of an "increased probability" of errors in future tests unless the issues were tackled.

The agency is the arm of the Department for Education (DfE) responsible for designing and administering government tests, including the phonics check and testing at key stages 1 and 2.

The DfE review concluded that the agency was "broadly fit for purpose" and ruled it could continue to develop and deliver tests in the short term, but that issues with its model posed a risk to the delivery of tests.

A "root-and-branch" investigation was ordered by the schools minister Nick Gibb in April after the government was forced to cancel this year's key stage 1 spelling, punctuation and grammar test following the leak of the paper online.

The document was uploaded by mistake to the STA's website last December and was



available to parents and schools for several months.

A second security breach, in which a different test was uploaded to a secure server, was also taken into account – although this was an error by the contracted test provider, and not the STA. The second breach did not result in the cancellation of the assessment.

In its review, the department said the issues identified increased the "probability of an error occurring in the future".

The review found a high vacancy rate at the agency – 15 per cent of posts last year – adding that the problem was "particularly acute" for specialist roles such as psychometrics.

The agency also said that the new primary tests, introduced this year, made it "one of the most challenging delivery cycles the agency has managed", however it was criticised by the department for an "unsustainable" reliance on staff goodwill, relating particularly to overtime.

While the agency was good at running technical processes, it was "less adept" at thinking about its customers in its process design. Problems stemmed from a "defensive and silo culture", shortage of commercial skills and "ineffective assurance process and culture".

The review said the agency had taken steps to improve things, but had not yet addressed the "underlying cultural issues" necessary to minimise the risk of another security breach.

It recommended the agency develop new infrastructure to enable stronger strategic leadership, clear end-to-end oversight and access to "meaningful performance data and analysis".

The report also suggested that more resources would be needed to improve the STA's performance.

Claire Burton, the agency's new chief executive, said STA "fully accepted" the review's findings and said it had already taken steps to respond to the security breaches, including a management restructure.

NEWS: EXCLUSIVE SEND SPECIAL

Five days' notice for joint special needs inspections

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

@STAUFENBERGJ Exclusive
Schools involved in new inspections
designed to unspections

designed to uncover whether local special educational needs are being met will be given a five-day notification period.

Delegates at a Westminster Education Forum, held last week in central London, pressed Joanna Hall (pictured), deputy director of schools at Ofsted, on the rules for joint inspections of local area provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Announced earlier in the year, the joint inspections are designed to uncover the quality of provision across the country, They will cover schools as well as other services, such as hospitals and the police.

Schools are typically given just a day's notice before an Ofsted inspection. Under the joint reviews they will receive five days to enable parents and wider stakeholders to be available to meet inspectors.

Anne Heavey,

education policy lead at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), told *Schools Week* that she was worried "a class of parent won't necessarily volunteer to come and speak, particularly in families with poorer circumstances where there are complex SEN needs".

At the seminar, Hall said the notice period allowed inspectors to "canvass for as many parents and carers as possible in your local area, not to be hand-picked, to have a real I guess with five days notice of a joint inspection they've got time to arrange an escort from the county boundary ...

representation at face-to-face meetings and school visits".

Councils would receive a "narrative" rather than a graded judgment on SEND delivery in maintained schools and

> academies in their area. Heavey said the method had been well-received in areas inspected so far. "These [narrative grades] encourage more

> > responsible reportwriting that is about the experience of the school as well.

"I've seen six reports, and I think they're quite useful. We have members in two areas.

and they felt the report was fair – less of a tick-box exercise and people being more honest with inspectors."

But she added that while the judgments were beneficial for educators, they were part of an "overload of information" for parents that, alongside the government's "local offer" websites that signposted SEND services, was "not particularly reassuring".

Amelia Roberts, a researcher in SEND at the Institute of Education, said the more contextual style of assessment could be undermined by a follow-up Ofsted inspection of a school if provision was thought poor.

"On the one hand they're saying this is just for the local area, but then, if there is something that worries them, that might lead to further consequences. There's a bit of a trust issue. There seems to be some form of communication between the two kinds of inspection, and that places some pressure on a school."

When asked to respond about those judgments, a spokesperson for Ofsted said: "The fact that judgments are narrative and not graded is not to say that they cannot be robust and identify clearly where a local area needs to improve.

"Narrative judgments in local authority SEND inspection outcome letters are drawn from the detailed findings from the inspection. These include areas of strength and any areas for development."

Councils cut support – while boosting reserves

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Schools are struggling to fund their pupils with special needs while some local authorities are building up reserves rather than distributing resources, according to a new report by an MP.

A review published last week by former Conservative MP and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) adviser, Lee Scott, said limits on funding were "being used [by local authorities] as a reason not to provide" support, including therapists for pupils.

Schools also had to contribute more cash for pupils from their own budgets before they were allowed to apply for extra help, it said.

Headteachers are already awaiting a decision on the future levels of higher needs funding for pupils. It has been pushed, with the national funding formula, on a year to 2018.

In his report, commissioned by former education secretary Nicky Morgan (pictured) in March and produced from conversations with 200 stakeholders, Scott said some councils held reserves of millions of pounds while simultaneously cutting SEND provision.

SPECIAL NEEDS

CO-ORDINATORS ARE DISTRESSED ABOUT THIS

"Looking at published accounts, it's clear that local authorities are holding large reserves for emergencies (in one case, these amounted to £150 million).

"I understand the reasons why they need to put money aside for these purposes, but the sums involved seem hard to justify when some local authorities are making large cuts to SEND services."

Schools were being asked to contribute more than the required annual £6,000 per child from their own "notional SEN budget" before they could apply for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and its attached greater funding – in some cases up to £4.000 more.

"Some local authorities only provided support after the school had contributed £6,000, whereas in another, the local authority expected the school to meet the first £10,000."

Councils were often keen to avoid the required EHCP assessments and the estimated £5,000 cost of transitioning from the old SEN statements, said Laxmi Patel, a SEND solicitor at Boyes Turner in Reading.

She said local authorities were now offering cash that schools could pitch for before requesting an EHC needs assessment, which resulted in teachers "pitting" against one another for a limited amount of funding.

"I know in some areas that local authorities are reluctant to pass on funding. They say rather than putting in a request for an EHCP assessment, they will provide an amount of money for a cluster of schools and then, say,

bid for money from this pot.

"Special needs co-ordinators are quite distressed about this as they are pitched against each other."

The report said that therapists were not always found for pupils; Patel agreed and said educational psychologists and speech and language therapists were especially challenging to recruit.

CALL FOR TOP-UP PGCE COURSE

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

A PGCE top-up training course for SEND – similar to a Pass Plus driving course, but for teaching – will help to fill vacancy rates in special schools, the forum heard.

Adam Boddison, chief executive of the National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen), told the Westminster forum that a specialist training pathway would improve the quality of SEND teaching and encourage more graduates into the historically undersupplied sector.

He also suggested a "supercharged pupil premium" ring-fenced for SEND spending to buffer funding and recruitment issues.

"There is an opportunity now for us to do something where graduates top up their masters credits with a 'PGCE Plus' where there is a specialism that could be SEND.

"I use the analogy of the Pass Plus driving licence, where you pass the test and then you actually learn to drive [better].

"We are moving away from qualified teacher status to a more graduated entry to the profession, and the idea of the 'PGCE Plus' goes with the grain of that."

Funds for SEND pupils also ought to be ring-fenced and monitored, as with the pupil premium for children on free school meals, he said.

"If you think about the impact that the pupil premium has had, not just by ring-fencing the budget, but making it statutory to monitor how it is spent, then imagine if schools also had to say 'this is how much we have chosen to invest in SEND, this is what we spent it on'.

"Governors and others would have a duty to monitor it. That would really focus hearts and minds."

Recruitment figures for the special school sector reveal slightly more vacant teaching posts compared with mainstream schools.

John Howson, an education data analyst who runs jobs website Teach Vac, said that one of the reasons for historically poor recruitment in SEND schools was "nowhere near good enough professional development to allow an easy transition over from mainstream into SEN. There's always been that difficulty."

Boddison also said national funding was needed for pupils who fell "just below the threshold" required for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a form of needs statement under the 2014 Children and Families Act.

A Department for Education spokesperson said the vacancy rate for the sector was low "at under 0.5 per cent" but added, "we are not complacent".

A new framework of core content for teacher training was published in July this year, the spokesperson said, which included detailed content on SEND provision.



Exclusive

NEWS

ORACY SKILLS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

A campaign calling for greater emphasis in schools on spoken communication skills and more training for teachers on those skills — has been launched.

Voice 21, an organisation linked to School 21, an east London free school, has teamed up with the English Speaking Union education charity to establish the Oracy Network, which will push for extra training to help teachers to develop pupils' speaking skills.

Recent government figures estimate that between 60 and 90 per cent of young people in custody have a communication impairment; the proportion is the highest form of additional need amongst young offenders and compares with an impairment rate of just 5-7 per cent of young people in the general population.

Natasha Porter, the chief executive of Unlocked Graduates, a Teach First-style scheme for prisons, said the consequences of a lack of adequate support and training to address communications issues in children could be "extremely damaging".

A YouGov poll taken for the campaign launch also showed that of more than 900 teachers surveyed,

57 per cent said they had not received any training in oracy in the past three years, and 53 per cent said they would not know where to look for more information if they wanted it.

This is despite indications in the same poll that most classroom teachers (68 per cent) and headteachers (84 per cent) felt oracy skills were "very important".

Beccy Earnshaw, Voice 21 director, said oracy had "meagre status" within education, but that the research showed "an appetite from schools and teachers for more time for talk and support for speaking and resources for rhetoric."

The report advocated school leaders ensure "adequate time" was set aside for the preparation and assessment of pupils' GCSE spoken language and that all teachers received relevant training.

It also said oracy should be written into school development plans, and leaders should appoint an "oracy champion".

Some of the methods were already used in 12 schools as part of a pilot being run by Voice 21 and funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

The EEF previously funded a pilot of the framework in School 21, which found it successfully helped students to develop their speaking and listening skills, although recommendations for further improvements included refinement of the curriculum and ensuring appropriate support materials were available.

Under the pilot, school staff were trained and oracy leads identified. Teachers developed a "whole-school oracy culture", an oracy curriculum, and use an oracy assessment tool developed with the University of Cambridge. The evaluation will be published in spring 2018.

Aldridge ditches struggling academy

JOHN DICKENS @JOHNDICKENSSW

A cash-strapped school has been ditched by the new academy trust founded by its

sponsor, leaving the government to search for a trust with better local resources. The Isle of Portland Aldridge community academy (IPACA) in Dorset was set to join

academy (IPACA), in Dorset, was set to join the multi-academy trust (MAT) founded by its lead sponsor, the Aldridge Foundation, in January.

Governors agreed to the move, despite the chair and vice-chair standing down over the approval and more than 1,000 parents signing a petition opposing it.

But Aldridge announced last week that it will instead cut ties with IPACA, which currently operates as a single academy trust, saying that to improve it needed the support of a MAT with "more resources to deploy locally".

The move further questions the viability of single academy trusts, leading one policy expert to claim more will have no choice but to join MATs.

It also raises questions about how geographically isolated academies fit into the ever-increasing MAT model of running their schools in clusters.

Robert Hill, an education consultant and former government education policy adviser, writing in a blog on the future of academies, said: "Many of the early



standalone converter academies may find that they need to review their position." Funding pressures made it "questionable whether operating as a single school represents a wise long-term policy".

However, he warned that some would find it "hard and painful" to lose autonomy. A spokesperson for the new trust,

Aldridge Education, said it was "being built on local clusters of schools working closely together to support educational improvement". IPACA did not fit into one of those clusters.

IPACA is an all-through school and sixth form for children who live on and around the Isle of Portland, off the coast of Dorset. It is the only one of 12 schools sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation not to be joining the new trust, which was set up in September.

The trust said the decision to walk away from IPACA was "mutually agreed" after talks with the region's schools commissioner Rebecca Clark. Aldridge will continue to provide support to the school while Clark finds a new sponsor. But that might prove tricky. IPACA was issued with a financial notice to improve in August following funding problems.

The school, set up across three sites in 2012, was supposed to move to a single building – a former Ministry of Defence weapons site – in 2014, but that move was delayed after planning permission was refused.

Though the school moved into its new home in September, annual accounts from 2014-15 state the increased costs of mixedsite use pushed the school into financial difficulties.

The Education Funding Agency has already provided a £520,000 advance in funding, which must be repaid by 2019, and 21 staff were made redundant earlier this year to "ensure longer-term stability".

The trust said it had listened to concerns and a spokesperson said a new MAT "should be able to achieve [results] faster than we may be able to".

A Department for Education spokesperson said its priority was to make sure that the school got the support it needed.

Non-teachers could fill vacant headships, says report

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN

Schools should hire business people with no classroom experience for non-teaching executive roles to plug an expected shortage of up to 19,000 school leaders in England by 2022, says a new report.

School Leadership Challenge: 2022, published today by the Future Leaders Trust, Teaching Leaders and Teach First, warns of growing school leadership recruitment problems – with schools in disadvantaged areas hit hardest.

Based on more than 70 interviews with headteachers and academy trust chief executives, as well as a "supply projection" based on the latest pupil and workforce data, it predicts a future shortage of between 14,000 to 19,000 leaders sparked by increasing pupil numbers, retirements, and school leaders leaving the profession early.

The report found an extra 5,000 leaders would be needed by 2022 because of growing pupil numbers, but predicted more than half of current leaders would leave in the next six years.

It recommended that the pool of candidates be expanded to people outside the profession.

James Toop, chief executive designate of the merging Teaching Leaders and The Future Leaders Trust, said private sector candidates would have the "right skills and experience" to fulfil roles such as finance managers and multi-academy trust chief executives.



Toby Young, new boss of the New Schools Network, has also renewed his call for businesspeople with no teaching experience to be appointed as school leaders.

Earlier in the year, he told *Schools Week* that theatre directors and NHS managers would be a particularly fertile source.

Rising chief executive salaries of up to £400,000 a year could also entice leaders from other sectors, the report said.

But Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, warned that schools should be "mindful" of their salary limits and should only pay what was expected in education, not the corporate sector.

Toop said most schools were not able to match salaries in the corporate sector, but claimed people would not move into schools to "make money".

"They want to make a difference, it is the



moral purpose of helping young people that makes them want to join."

The report found schools serving the most disadvantaged children, which make up 40 per cent of all schools in England, would need "10,000 more school leaders by 2022".

But a Department for Education spokesperson said the government did not "recognise" the report's figures.

"The latest school workforce data shows that there are 68,800 full-time equivalent leaders in state schools in England. Furthermore, since 2010 the proportion of schools reporting a headteacher vacancy has decreased and the number of school leaders over the age of 50 has decreased significantly."

She added that the department did, however, recognise that "we need to work with the profession to ensure we can develop even more great school leaders".



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NEWS

VACANT SLOTS ON HONOURS COMMITTEE

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN

The government is on the hunt for three people to join the board of the education honours committee.

Members recommend who should receive honours, including damehoods and knighthoods, awarded biannually through the New Year's list, announced on New Year's Day, and the Queen's Birthday list, announced in June.

Candidates are put forward by the public, government departments and other professional bodies.

The committee then puts its

recommendations to the prime minister who submits the list to the Queen.

The education honours committee is chaired by the Harris federation chief executive, Sir Daniel Moynihan, who recently called for more schools to nominate their unsung heroes.

The committee wants more subject leaders, long-serving teachers, support staff and lollipop ladies to be put up for a nomination.

"We're looking for people who have made a sustained and significant contribution, or done something innovative and gone beyond their job," Moynihan said.

In an advertisement published last week, the cabinet office said applicants needed to be experts in education and "sympathetic with the aims of the honours system".

They must be able to "act with independence of judgment" and have the capacity to handle a large volume of submissions in a "timely and efficient manner".

In this year's Queen Birthday honours, seven of the 18 people with links to school sector to receive awards in the top four categories were either heads, chairs or chief executives of trusts.

But *Schools Week* recently reported that research by academics Ben Laker and Alex Hill questioned if the heads achieving honours made the most sustainable changes.

Their data suggested that a tiny but influential group of heads – who they called "surgeons" – adopted a damaging "shorttermist" approach that tended to "grow results quickly by kicking out low-performing pupils" but were disproportionately recognised with a top award.

The most recent advert suggests, however, that the board is looking for a diverse group of people to select future recommendations.

Entries are "particularly welcome" from women, ethnic minority and disabled candidates who are "under-represented at this level of public life".

The roles are unpaid part-time posts requiring two days work throughout the year.

Applications for the three vacant posts close on November 30. Call Lucy Clegg at the Cabinet Office on 020 276 2772 for more details.

Business managers 'need more training'

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

More school business managers must "aspire" to become senior executives as the rise in multi-academy trusts – and damaging financial scandals – require greater scrutiny of school accounts, says Stephen Morales, chief executive of the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM).

Morales told the association's annual conference in Birmingham this week that he was "battling" to get more managers to leave their local roles, particularly in primary schools, and fill a need for strong financial oversight across multiple schools.

Of 16,000 school business managers, a sample survey by NASBM showed that 10 per cent were senior executives of large schools or multiple-academy trusts (MATs) – while the majority (50 per cent) held "varying degrees of influence" in leadership roles within single schools, and a large proportion (40 per cent) were in smallerscale administrative roles.

With schools increasingly joining trusts and rising instances of visible financial malpractice, many managers needed new training to fill a looming gap, Morales said.

"The elephant in the room really is, do you regard yourself as a professional? That 10 per cent of senior executives has to get bigger. With the rise of MATs and other types of collaborative structure, and an almost systematic dismantling of local authorities, oversight has to come from somewhere else – and it isn't naturally



going to come from a senior leadership team that doesn't have the expertise.

"Ten per cent out of 16,000 is not enough. If we end up in 2024 with 5,000 [trusts] presiding over 27,000 schools, for example, then we will need in the region of 5,000 executives in those roles."

Yet many local school business managers felt attached to their local schools and were less willing to pursue schemes such as the School Business Director apprenticeship set to be launched in September next year, he said.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), warned that trust in school finances had been "rocked by financial scandals" including second salaries, related party transactions and "employing relatives".

The case of Durand Academy had also

provoked an outcry over poor financial oversight at government level.

Speaking later to *Schools Week*, Hobby said a business manager's monitoring of a "superhead's" practices was increasingly important.

"What we really need is someone who knows the school – this idea that you can manage it remotely...creates too much room for manoeuvre.

"Ultimately the head retains accountability. But when you're insulated from challenge, and everyone just agrees with everything you say, which is a symptom of the superhead scenario, then unless you've got someone by your side who will say 'hold on, is that wise?', you end up in trouble."

The conference also heard that membership of the association is up from 1,800 in 2013 to 3,200 this year.

Independents don't want to switch to free schools

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Independent schools do not have a "widespread appetite" for moving into the state sector to make their education more widely available, according to the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

Exclusive

Barnaby Lenon, chair of the ISC, said in response to a question posed by *Schools Week* that he currently had no evidence independent schools were interested in becoming state-funded free schools.

He made the disclosure at a Westminster Education Forum event in central London on Wednesday, which focused on the paradox between rising costs for the independent sector and the need to prevent further fee increases so that professional parents could still afford private schooling.

Lenon also refuted that academies – with a couple of exceptions – had improved the state school sector, pointing to "deplorably low" GCSE results in the summer.

Delegates heard that private school fees had risen faster than parents' salaries – with those in the £50,000 to £100,000 bracket now "struggling" and increasingly replaced by those earning £200,000 a year or more.

When questioned if private schools might seek to make their education more affordable



by converting to become free schools, Lenon said: "A small number of independent schools [have moved over]. I'm not aware that any ISC independent schools is interested in moving over to the state school sector. So the answer to your question is no.

"The pretty small number that went into state schools in the past few years did so for very good reasons, and were dead right to do so, but there isn't a widespread appetite, no. "The reasons the schools I know well went into the state school sector [...] are because they were short of pupils, and their numbers were declining. They have been revitalised by going into the state sector and being able to get rid of fees."

But Lenon refuted that escalating fees had led to a decline in demand for private schooling, and responded to an audience member who spoke of the improving state sector snapping at their heels by saying: "You're just wrong. [...] There are two academy chains that are doing well, Harris and Ark, and there are a number of state schools in London.

"But taking academies as a whole, it has not yet resulted in a big and significant improvement in results.

"Let's remind ourselves that this summer, 53 per cent of pupils in this country got five GCSEs at A* to C in English and maths – it's a deplorably low figure, and it hasn't gone up, it's not going up."

The government's consultation into selection proposes that independent schools that do not sponsor academies and provide bursaries for poorer pupils could face the removal of charitable tax status.

Lenon said that he thought the government was "serious" about the plan "but I personally hope we can avoid that".



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33%

26% NATIONALLY

NEWS

RSCs: where are we now?

East Midlands and Humber: Jenny Bexon-Smith

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Jenny Bexon-Smith (pictured) has been a vocal defender of her work as she presided over significant growth in academies in her region.

Almost a third of schools in the East Midlands and Humber are now academies, up from a quarter in 2014.

Bexon-Smith's headteacher board is much as it was, with five of its six original members still there, and all attending at least 29 of the 33 meetings held since September 2014.

But MPs have been critical that it no longer has any elected members that currently work as heads.

Chris Beckett and Christine Linnitt, both serving heads when they were appointed two years ago, are no longer in school roles, and recent departure Hugh Howe, from Beauchamp college, Leicestershire, has been replaced by the chief executive of the Hull Collaborative academies trust, Estelle MacDonald.

"I think really what they bring is that experience and expertise of running schools," Bexon-Smith told the education select committee last month.

"They were all former headteachers, even

though they may have continued their career to become CEOs.

"I suppose you can argue about the terminology, but they have all fulfilled, in my particular case, that role, so it would seem appropriate."

Bexon-Smith's approach to local authorities has not always been popular.

In June this year she was overruled by the former education secretary, Nicky Morgan, after a council officer reported she had "refused to meet" with his children and young people's committee and had written to him asking he refrain from meeting academy leaders.

John Peck, who chairs the committee, told Morgan that he had received a letter from Bexon-Smith telling him not to hold his planned annual meeting with heads of academies that fell below floor targets.

Morgan told Peck to continue the meetings "if that's something that as a local authority you feel is appropriate. You have a relationship with those schools in other ways, so why wouldn't you continue to have that relationship with them?"

According to the most recent senior staff salaries data from the Department for Education, Bexon-Smith was paid a basic salary of between £140,000 and £145,000 as of September 2015.

EAST MIDLANDS AND THE HUMBER

	OPEN SCHOOLS	OPEN AG	CADEMIES
	2016	2014	2016
Barnsley	90	25	39
Derby	103	16	16
Derbyshire	416	19	41
Doncaster	125	37	44
East Riding of Yorkshire	149	11	12
Kingston upon Hull	96	46	60
Leicester	110	9	17
Leicestershire	281	137	152
Lincolnshire	361	116	138
North East Lincolnshire	63	41	51
North Lincolnshire	80	25	25
Nottingham	101	45	51
Nottinghamshire	338	70	95
Rotherham	121	27	59
Rutland	22	8	14
Sheffield	176	51	66
York	63	4	13
TOTAL			
East Midlands and the Hum	1ber 2,695	687	893
England	21,932	4,419	5,758
		1	



Headteacher board

2014

Chair: Jenny Bexon-Smith (RSC) **Elected** Chris Beckett (Cambridge Meridian academies trust) Hugh Howe (Beauchamp college) Christine Linnitt (Holywell primary school) Geoff Lloyd (former headteacher of Tuxford scademy) **Appointed** Chris Abbott (Hunsley trust) Andrew Burns (Redhill academy)

2016

Chair: Jenny Bexon-Smith (RSC)

Elected

Chris Beckett attended 29 of 33 meetings Christine Linnitt attended 30 of 33 meetings Geoff Lloyd attended 32 of 33 meetings

Appointed

Chris Abbott attended 29 of 33 meetings

Andrew Burns attended 30 of 33 meetings

Estelle MacDonald (Collingwood primary school/Hull Collaborative academies trust)

It's been two years since the first regional schools commissioners and their headteacher boards were appointed. To keep you up to date, *Schools Week* is running four updates in which Freddie Whittaker looks at two RSC areas each week. Who's new, who's still there – and how they are doing on those all-important academisation rates. This week: Lancashire and West Yorkshire, and East Midlands and Humber

Lancashire and West Yorkshire: Vicky Beer

wo years on and the Lancashire and West Yorkshire headteacher board has shrunk, retained just three of the original seven members and has a new commissioner in charge.

In post since last October, Vicky Beer (pictured) has not often appeared in public and, unlike most of the other commissioners, has not appeared before a parliamentary committee.

She did, however, release a "vision statement" on her role and that of her headteacher board, in which she talked of their being able to "enable and accelerate" increases in school standards by "developing academy sponsorship and multi-academy trusts" and "opening excellent new provision and challenging underperformance".

"Our aim is that young people in Lancashire and West Yorkshire should receive an education at least as good as in other parts of the country; if not the world, and that we work together with partners in the region to secure improved outcomes for all young people."

Progress in converting schools into academies, however, has been slow. At present, 16 per cent are academies



compared with 13 per cent two years ago – and 10 percentage points below the national rate of 26 per cent.

In some local authority areas, the increase is tiny. In Lancashire, for example, the proportion of schools that are academies rose from 4.6 per cent in 2014 to 4.7 per cent this year.

Some areas have moved more quickly, though. In Bolton, 20 per cent of schools are now academies, up from 12.6 per cent in 2014, and in Bradford the proportion rose from 18.5 per cent to almost 25 per cent.

The group advising Beer has changed dramatically in the two years since its creation.

The headteacher board had seven members back in 2014: four were elected

16%

OPEN ACADEMIES

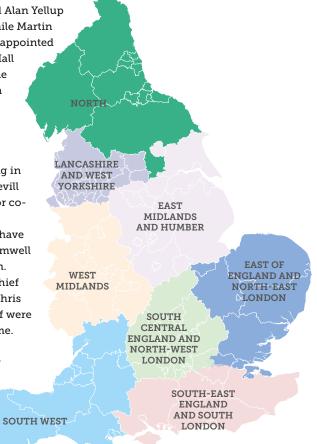
26% NATIONALLY (Jack Acklam, Pamela Birch and Alan Yellup were serving school leaders, while Martin Shevill was a former head), two appointed (academy trust bosses Sir Iain Hall and Sir Michael Wilkins) and one co-opted (Sir Rod Aldridge from the London-based Aldridge Foundation).

Now, the board has just five members with just three of the four elected members remaining in service – Acklam, Birch and Shevill – with none of the appointees or cooptees still in place.

Two new co-opted members have joined: primary head Karen Bramwell and secondary head Tom Quinn.

The Gorse Academies Trust chief executive, Sir John Townsley, Chris O'Shaughnessy and Beer herself were also board members at some time.

The most recent Department for Education senior staff salary data is from last September, before Beer was appointed. Her predecessor Paul Smith was paid a basic salary of between £110,000 and £115,000.



Headteacher board

2014

Chair: Paul Smith (RSC)

Elected

Jane Acklam (Moor End academy)

Pamela Birch (Hambleton primary school)

Martin Shevill (former headteacher, Consilium academies trust)

Alan Yellup (Ossett academy and sixth form college)

Appointed

Sir Iain Hall (Great Schools for All Children trust)

Sir Michael Wilkins (Outwood Grange academies trust)

Co-opted

Sir Rod Aldridge (The Aldridge Foundation)

2016

Chair: Vicky Beer (RSC)

Elected

Jane Acklam attended 28 of 31 meetings Pamela Birch attended 29 of 31 meetings

Martin Shevill attended 30 of 31 meetings

Co-opted

Karen Bramwell (St Paul's Church of England primary school) attended 3 of 3 meetings

Tom Quinn (St John Plessington Catholic college) attended 12 of 15 meetings

LANCASHIRE AND WEST YORKSHIRE

	OPEN SCHOOLS	OPEN AC	ADEMIES
	2016	2014	2016
Blackburn with Darwen	76	10	12
Blackpool	42	19	22
Bolton	130	16	26
Bradford	212	38	52
Bury	82	3	4
Calderdale	102	28	29
Halton	65	8	9
Kirklees	180	21	31
Knowsley	61	5	7
Lancashire	632	28	30
Leeds	272	40	51
Liverpool	171	17	16
Manchester	180	44	51
Oldham	105	16	24
Rochdale	88	4	7
Salford	99	10	12
Sefton	105	8	10
St Helens	69	2	4
Stockport	111	9	9
Tameside	97	10	22
Trafford	95	19	22
Wakefield	141	56	70
Warrington	88	7	10
Wigan	131	10	17
Wirral	126	15	18
TOTAL			
Lancashire and West York	shire 3,460	443	565
England	21,932	4,419	5,758

NEWS



EDITOR'S COMMENT

Beware the tightrope-walker's error: it can get to us all

One summer day in 1974, Phillippe Petit walked on a high-wire 400 metres (1,350 feet) above New York City on a cable running between the Twin Tower buildings. He fumbled in his last moments, but lived to tell the tale having been made aware that tightrope walkers often fall in their last few steps.

In the film of the event, The Walk, Petit's mentor explains why this happens.

"Most wire walkers, they die when they arrive," says Papa Rudy. "Or, they think they have arrived. But they are still on the wire. If you have three steps to do, and if you do those steps arrogantly, if you think you are invincible, you are going to die."

All of us have fallen prey to this at some point. Believing we are nearing a glorious victory we take our eye off the ball. We think we have arrived. We get arrogant. We throw it away.

It is rare in this editorial space that I commend the government for its actions, but not unheard of.

This week, two things are worthy of praise: the turnaround effort at Chadwick Academy, featured in this week's profile (page 14), and also the education department's attempt to make academy finances more transparent in future by proactively publishing the names of highly paid CEOs, consultancy costs, related-party transactions and reported frauds in an annual government report.

Both are evolutions of policies the government should be proud to have implemented over the past few years. The multi-academy trust model

comes in for a lot of stick but, as the profile of Tuesday Humby, principal of Chadwick Academy shows, it helps to speedily get superb leaders into challenging schools and can rapidly improve life chances.

Academy transparency is also on the up. At the Oxford Governors' Association last weekend I spoke about the genuine efforts of the Education Funding Agency to limit fraud in academies and pointed out that the malaise about some academy chiefs' extraordinary wages only exists because we all now know how much money they earn – a situation not always mirrored in the maintained sector.

An incredulous audience member asked if I really, truly believed the EFA were trying to improve things. "Yes," I said, "but the problem is that

"Yes," I said, "but the problem is tha back in 2010 to 2012, Michael Gove did the academy trust equivalent of bringing kids to a theme park and letting them run off without telling them the rules for when they had to be back at the bus.

"The education funding agency is now seeing the consequences of that. It is running around the park, half an hour from closing time, having already got most of the kids onto the bus, but still trying to grab the stragglers. The problem is that a glut of them are in a ride queue and refusing to budge, and one or two are at the top of the big dipper, hands in the air, shouting "you can't catch me, you didn't tell me the ruuuules."

They really are trying and the report seems like an additional move to make that happen - but this is precisely when the final three steps matter.

Both policies – turnaround, and academy transparency – are nearly right. Admittedly, they need tweaks. It would indeed be helpful to know more about the way academy sponsors are chosen. Of course all reports into fraud should be published. Sure, we need to keep great leaders coming into the profession to keep up the supply of turnaround heads.

amiss_mcinerney | laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co

But, we are nearly there. The other side of the building is in sight.

Which is why Nick Gibb's appearance at the select committee this week, in which he attempted to give evidence showing that selective schools will improve education, was such an utter disappointment.

He spoke at length about the work of non-selective schools that have transformed children's lives, then tacked on nonsensical comments about grammars being needed to do it.

He said that children who didn't get into selectives would be given a top education in rapidly improving comps; but failed to say, then, why grammars were needed at all.

It would also be disappointing if the DfE decides after its "dry-run" report that, actually, it wasn't going to go ahead with the publication.

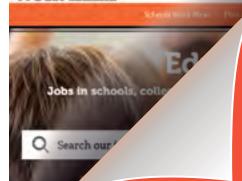
I have fingers crossed they won't. But taking for granted that great things will happen simply because we see the possibility ahead of us is precisely the tightrope-walkers' error. Let us not mess up the last three steps.

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Department for Education

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READERS' ΕΡΙ Υ

New free schools chief resets **Cameron's target**



Jonathan Jones, Nottingham

Just an idea – why not let local authorities open new schools?

...

Janet Downs, Bourne

One of the consequences of the academies programme, which is now rebounding on the government, is that existing academies cannot be forced to expand. This means that if they don't increase their pupil admission numbers to cope with local increased need, then the only way to satisfy this need is to either expect local non-academies to take the extra pupils OR to build new schools. This is particularly the case with secondary schools as most are now academies. The government is, therefore, left with no option but to open new schools. In the past any increased need could have been absorbed more quickly and cheaply by spreading the need around several schools. And there is no guarantee, of course, that any new free school would adequately cope with the increased need. It could be a new faith school, for example, or a single-sex school.

Clare Orrell ...

Small victory but I was so glad he was knocked out in the first round of Pointless Celebrities!

Women need to get even, so let's ban men from school names



Marc Gravell

I agree that more balance is hugely desirable, but the suggestion here is absurd and knee-jerk. Maybe that is the intent - suggest something completely ridiculous, so a later "compromise" to something that is merely explicitly biased (rather than accidentally biased) seems reasonable. Perhaps a better aim would be to stop naming them after people at all - this also avoids the problem when heroes inevitably fall from grace.



@lennyvalentino

Gender neutral names are important. In an era of choice, names can influence unhelpfully

@igettavlor

Let's do it. When we get to @Beyonce I think we are ready as a society to adopt an ABAB sequence.

@PatrickJDiamond

I attended Lady Hawkins' School, named after its founder. We had a lozenge badge, rather than a shield

@5N_Afzal

Should men be asking why many (most?) ships are named after females?

What's in a school name? Lots of heroes, few heroines

@Penny_Ten

Nice feature in @SchoolsWeek on education establishments named after women. Suggested next up the new @AdaCollege named after Ada Lovelace?

asteveLIVS

When I lived and worked in Lyon, France, I taught in a school called "école Audrey Hepburn".

aimlaurie

Why aren't schools named after women?! Now that I think about it, I've never seen a school named after a woman.

Breakfast clubs should be on every school's menu

@tomholder



I've been hugely impressed by success of @HPFSP's breakfast club. Fully subscribed and giving kids a positive start to the day [Editor's note: HPFSP = Harris primary free school Peckham]

So it's goodbye to the bill... or is it?



Lorena Arikamedoshika Woodfine

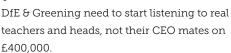
Good news for my school. We were looking at being forced to become an academy next year.

Lesley Brennan



I cannot believe this... so unexpected. Great news, but too late for so many schools.

@Sazhewitt



REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



Ofsted quietly ditches good practice case studies

••• JOHN SMITH, ADDRESS SUPPLIED

Handily, this creates further business opportunities in education for the private sector.

This is the opposite of where Ofsted should be going. Inspectors are experts in their areas and so they should be passing this on in as many ways as possible.

And the "good practice" cut and paste will just be replaced with a "what works" one backed not by professional experience and couched in careful terms, but one demonstrated with "science", "evidence", randomised control trials, "thought leaders" such as Schleicher, Hattie and Lemov, and organisations such as the Education **Endowment Foundation and Education Policy Institute.**

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14 🚽 @SCHOOLSWEEK

PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY @MISS_MCINERNEY

Tuesday Humby - Principal, Ormiston Chadwick academy, Widnes

ever in a month of Tuesdays did I think Bankfield, a comprehensive in my home town and wellknown as "the dodgy school", would become a turnaround success. When it went into special measures two years ago I advised local councillors to raze it the ground.

But it didn't take a month of Tuesdays to resolve the situation. It took just one.

Tuesday Humby, the principal of what is now Ormiston Chadwick academy, has steered the school in just two years from around a third of pupils receiving five good GCSEs to two-thirds hitting the benchmark. More impressively, the school's Progress 8 score is in the top five in the north of England (beaten only by single-sex faith schools) and the school's Attainment 8 score is higher than the local outstanding-rated secondary. There are nearly 650 pupils in the five-year-group school, and numbers are now growing.

The change is so much more than numbers, though. It's about reputation too.

Widnes is a small industrial town, nestled between Liverpool and Chester, famous for chemical factories, power plants and industrial incinerators. When foot-andmouth disease spread across the country in 2001, the dead cows were brought to us for burning. Open a window downstream of the works on a windy day, and you'll gag.

A decade ago its four secondary schools were known locally as the outstanding one (a former grammar), the religious one (quite decent), and the two dreadful ones: Fairfield (my alma mater) and Bankfield.

It's the sort of eco-system seen in many small towns, and it's the reason why the government is able to make a persuasive case for grammars: if you fear your child will go to the dreadful school, why not buy into the idea of an escape-ticket in the form of a brilliant selective school?

But the story of Widnes, and of Chadwick, shows the situation isn't irresolvable.

Six years ago the council decided it wasn't fair to condemn more generations to mediocre schooling and closed Fairfield. (For transparency I must report it was my dad, a local councillor, who made this decision. At the time, I didn't agree with him. But he was right, as dads so often are). The children at Fairfield merged into the outstanding Wade Deacon school, and its results held up.

Bankfield improved for a while on its own, but results plummeted and two years ago it was put into special measures.

At the time, Humby, now 38, was working in a school across the River Mersey, run by the Ormiston academy trust, and was asked by the headteacher, John Rigby, to help with teaching and learning at the failing school.

She was supposed to be there two days a week; within one she sent him an email: "I don't want to come back, I want to stay here and sort it out."

Two days later she became the principal. Fifteen months later and I heard rumour of a brilliant new school in Widnes that people were clamouring to get their children into. I was bowled over when told which school it was.

There are no bones about it: Chadwick is an ugly school. Growing up in Widnes you learn that factories don't look like they do in Lowry paintings. Mostly they look like hulking great impersonal blocks: think Ikea after an apocalypse.

Within seconds of being in reception, however, a girthfully pregnant Humby waves me through to her office



where she is eating a bacon buttie. She has arranged for four former pupils, who were in year 10 when she arrived, to take me on a tour and sends me packing before I can ask any questions.

"They'll tell it as it is," she says. And they do.

They talk of a school where bullying was endemic and the teaching "awful".

"At the beginning of year 10, I'd have happily left and never come back," says Sophie, who is now studying performing arts in Liverpool.

What changed? "The teaching!" says Georgia, who describes how teachers started to become organised, focus on results, run revision lessons, "showed they cared".

"I remember Miss Humby standing up in assembly when she arrived," Sophie says, "and thinking, 'this is either going to go really well, or really badly', but she talked about what she was going to do for us rather than the other way around."

The school's logo was redesigned, by pupils, via a contest. A house system was introduced, with the pupils picking house names based on people they admired, including Malala Yousafzai, the young girl shot by the Taliban for trying to get an education, and Tim Parry, a boy killed in the Warrington bombing in 1993 which happened a few miles from the school. The parents of both attended a "reopening" ceremony. For the first time, it gave the pupils a belief their school was no longer the "dreadful" one.

The pupils also talk about the introduction of a school-wide behaviour system. In an art room, they show me a display clearly laying out stepped consequences for misdemeanours.

"Before you didn't know if anyone would follow up,"



Sophie says, "for bullying, or for behaviour."

Humby explains she put a stop to that culture: "The students were crying out for change. We've got the mantra: 'No one disrupts the learning of others'. And, you know, kids have bad days, but the ones that disrupt the learning of others, they have to come out of the class, and we are just firm about that. They'll go into isolation and someone will work with them."

Being out of class must never mean getting behind with learning, she says, but sometimes a different curriculum approach is required. She holds out a timetable sheet full of scribbles. It is for a pupil who missed a great deal of school earlier in the year and is now so behind in languages she is misbehaving in lessons. Extra tuition failed. The data suggests she is too far behind to catch up, so Humby has personally re-arranged the timetable to add extra classes in other subjects where the pupil might get the

"THE STUDENTS WERE CRYING OUT FOR CHANGE"



IT'S A PERSONAL THING

1. What job did you want to do when you were a child? I wanted to be an author.

2. Favourite book?

The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles by Julie Edwards (the married name of singer and actress Dame Julie Andrews). It's a children's book I read as a kid about the value and power of a great imagination. I still love it as much as an adult.

3. If you were invisible for a day, what would you do? I'd have an uninterrupted duvet day with some ale, terribly unhealthy snacks and *The West Wing*.

4. Which animal do you think is most similar to you? (And why?) A former feral cat that has sort of been domesticated. I've got one; we have many similarities.

5. What's the best piece of work advice you've ever been given? My gran (also a teacher) always told me to "spread myself about". She would have been mortified to know the modern day connotations of that phrase... But what she meant was to experience as much as you can, as often as you can. So I applied that to work. I believe that being able to draw on a whole range of different experiences made me a better teacher and leader.

DAY HUMBY

greatest benefit

It seems an exhausting approach and somewhat at odds with the "no excuses" approach pushed in other turnaround models, where curriculum is narrow and expectations homogenous at all times.

As well as having kept drama, dance, art and music separate – and providing pupils with lessons in each – Chadwick also offers a wide variety of GCSE options, including engineering, sports science, and hair and beauty, taught in a salon with washing basins and mirrors.

"We do the GCSE, so it is more theoretical and mostly about the science, which means when our learners move on to college they are able to go straight into the level 3 beauty qualifications," the department head explains as we pop our heads into a room with massage tables laid out.

The subject diversity is Humby's doing. When she took over, all pupils were forced to take all the subjects in the

English Baccalaureate, which she felt was "crippling" some students.

"We do make the EBacc available for every child here. Low ability, high ability. It's available for everyone. But so is hair and beauty," she says.

Why not kept things simple, though, and concentrate resources on more academic subjects?

"Because that's just limiting them, isn't it? ... Also, it came down to what I knew would work for the students, just giving them loads of choice... I know that the more choice you give them the more it's going to work. And what came before wasn't working. So things had to change."

She is not, however, someone who lets pupils off. She shows a thick document, known as "the bible", in which she has data on every pupil in year 11. The pages in it are shared with parents and pupils each half-term, to inspire and celebrate progress. It's also clear Humby knows her staff and pupils inside and out. At one point she quips, "By the time the 2016 year 11 left, I could have told you what they all ate for breakfast." (I don't think she's kidding.)

If the approach is unconventional it is perhaps because her own background is odd. Educated at a very good secondary school in Macclesfield she became "bratty and lippy" by the time of her A-levels, but threw herself into drama.

After completing a degree in the subject she signed up to a PGCE at Manchester Metropolitan University before taking a teaching job at Poynton high, a school in a leafy part of Cheshire.

Supported by a brilliant department head, Allie Cutler, after one year she felt convinced she knew "everything in the world about drama and theatre" and moved to Pool Academy in Cornwall, where she planned to be a fabulous teacher and spend most of her leisure time surfing. But the intake was far more deprived, and the school was in chaos. Nothing from her previous experience worked. She had to scrap everything and start again. "I went to the head after two weeks, and I'm not a crier, but I cried on her and said 'what have I done', and she told me to grow up! So I did."

Her next position was in New Zealand, at an allgirls Catholic school, and then – plot twist! – on her return to the UK, she decided to do something different, and so trained as a solicitor.

After realising she was spending more effort trying to get back into schools to run mock trials than she did on her legal battles, she re-entered education with a position in a small school serving a Plymouth Brethren community in Huyton, Liverpool, where its religious beliefs meant she couldn't use any published resources– an attractive challenge. "I thought to myself: How do you teach politics without any resources? I want to see this!"

Two years later she applied to Future Leaders with a view to becoming a head and was placed as a senior leader in Ormiston Bolingbroke academy, a turnaround school in a deprived part of Runcorn, before being dispatched to Chadwick.

She breaks off the story half-way through to ask if it's really an interesting thing for people to know. "Wouldn't they rather hear about the school?" she asks.

But her biography starts to answer a question gnawing in my mind.

It takes 10 minutes to drive from my parents' house to the old Bankfield School. Twice the route passes through an area known as Knowsley. The longest stretch of road on the journey actually straddles the border: houses on one side are in Widnes, houses on the other in Knowsley.

If the name is familiar, it is because Knowsley is known for having the worst schools in the country and is commonly referred to by ministers as a justification for any education reforms. Just this week, schools minister Nick Gibb mentioned it as a place that could be improved by

grammar schools.

But there are only six secondary schools in Knowsley and the kids there are the same as the kids at Chadwick – white, working class, from an industrial area. If turnaround doesn't need selection in Widnes, why would it need it there?

Humby doesn't bat an eyelid when I ask if she's worried about a local school becoming a grammar. "Bring 'em on," she says, "I'll still beat them."

She worries for the pupils, though. Some of her most successful former pupils would never have got in to a selective school, and many already feel they are written off when they arrive at secondary school with low test scores. One pupil recently gave a talk to the year 7s to explain how his own low scores on entry meant he was only predicted low scores and yet he achieved all Bs and Cs at GCSE.

The nagging question, however, is whether there are a limited number of leaders like Humby, whose ability to understand, challenge, and yet improve the community seems uncanny. Her diverse set of experiences, within education and outside, is likely a plus – but difficult to replicate.

However, there is a glimmer of hope.

A benefit of the multi-academy system is that it allows new leaders to quickly move into schools that need them. It was the executive head, John Rigby, who saw her potential and placed her in the school and, in return for her concentrating on teaching and learning, he oversaw the school's finances for the first year. The broader Ormiston network also helped.

"BRING THE GRAMMARS ON. I'LL STILL BEAT THEM"

SCHOOLS WEEK





Staff talk about this with enthusiasm, describing how they felt they could draw on expertise in other schools in the network and how they too aimed to be promoted within schools across the network, "just like Tuesday" did. Maybe the self-improving system has legs after all.

Before I leave I ask her the obvious but burning question.

She smiles. "It was after Tuesday Weld, the actress. My brothers used to say that because I was born last my parents had decided to 'call it a day'. But, yeah, Tuesday Weld. It's an awful name."

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SCHOOLS WEEK

OPINION

MARK DAVE Chief executive, Association of Employment and Learning Providers

Why schools should engage with apprenticeships

The apprenticeship levy will be a game-changer for many young people, especially those who get little benefit from being stuck in a classroom, says Mark Dawe. But first they need to know all their available choices

he introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April next year will be a gamechanger in young people's choices. Many large, household-name employers that have never engaged with apprenticeships are now starting to offer programmes.

But whether or not young people will take up these opportunities will depend on their exposure to the full range of choices at hand. And in this, schools have a huge part to play.

As every teacher knows, for many young people being stuck in a classroom for a day longer than necessary is of no benefit to either them or the school. Many will be motivated to learn only once they understand the practical application of learning.

We need to sort out careers advice

An apprenticeship is a job with built-in training and education. It is in work where the employability skills are developed; it is working that motivates the learner to develop the skills and understanding.

As for English and maths, many pupils who struggle throughout their time at school suddenly see the relevance and fly through English and maths qualifications that are geared to the world of work. Once we have managed to remove the diabolical GCSE retake policy, we will see young people thrive not just in job-related learning, but also in these core subjects.

Higher and degree apprenticeships are the really new opportunities and there is likely to be a significant shift away from traditional university attendance. They offer the opportunity to go into work at 18 (or later) and earn, learn and avoid substantial debt while getting a full degree. This is a degree with a salary every month rather than a debt mountain – and a job at the end, appropriate for a graduate. If you need just one example, listen to the recent Radio 4 Bottom Line podcast, where a Barclays apprentice talks eloquently about how she was running a number of branches during her apprenticeship before any of the graduate intake had even started their first day.

So what do schools need to do? My advice is to engage with your local providers of apprenticeships: and independent training providers, who offer more than three quarters of all apprenticeship opportunities and colleges. Often there are local networks who will be happy to coordinate with a school, but, if not, AELP will help. There are national websites and listings of opportunities, but our members understand the local environment.

Across the education sector as a whole we need to sort out careers advice so that this information is easily accessible in all schools. I still don't see any evidence of this happening consistently, coherently and in a sustainable way, as one imposed initiative fails after another.

Ideally we would like to see a single, all-age national careers service for England that engages schools with employers and all types of providers, especially provider networks that have local employer contacts at their fingertips. The new government's commitment to a social justice agenda means that the service will have to be universally accessible and knowledgeable about work-based learning options such as apprenticeships and traineeships. A single organisation will also be able to work more closely with Jobcentre Plus, thus increasing the chances for many people of securing sustainable employment. Even better, it would strip out some of the current expensive duplication.

Finally, the government needs to ensure that the destination into an apprenticeship from school is considered equal to further learning or university. Many headteachers tell me that until this is changed, there will always be a bias away from apprenticeships. This one is 100 per cent in the hands of the Department for Education – such a major impact, such an easy thing to change. And why wouldn't it, if it genuinely believes in apprenticeships giving parity of opportunity for young people?



SU TURNER

Director of children and young people, Centre for Public Scrutiny

Council scrutiny can fill the gap in accountability

There is an accountability gap in the new education landscape that council scrutiny committees could help to fill, just as they do in health, says Su Turner

ccountability matters and is well understood within schools between pupils, teachers and parents, as it is between staff, headteachers and governors. The same is not the case, however, when you look at the wider system.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has a keen interest in the proposal to give local government overview and scrutiny committees increased powers in education (*Schools Week*, October 7) and has been actively lobbying for the change.

Over the past nine months I have been talking with education experts, partners and colleagues about the future role of councils in education. The conclusion is that there is clearly an accountability gap and while legislation would not in itself resolve that, it could help to provide a positive contribution to schools locally.

Once the sole responsibility of councils, oversight is now a complex shared responsibility between many, including Ofsted, regional schools commissioners (RSCs), local authorities and academies.

This risks creating a silo approach to educational oversight and accountability. The focus now appears to be on either individual schools or multi-academy trusts or regions. The concern is that without local oversight there is no check and balance – outside the school's own governance systems – on how the overall education system is operating at a local level.

There is a precedent, however, of how local authorities could fill this gap, based on the health system.

The Health and Social Care Act 2001 gave councils new scrutiny powers to ensure that local people's health was championed and safeguarded locally and led to the creation of health overview and scrutiny committees in nearly all top-tier councils. The act places a duty on NHS bodies to provide reasonable information on request; for health leaders to attend scrutiny meetings and answer questions; and a right to be consulted on significant service change proposals.

There are examples from across the health field where scrutiny has played a positive role, not just safeguarding standards, but by being an active participant in improving health outcomes. Recently a number of health providers worked with local authority scrutiny and schools to increase uptake of childhood immunisation. Scrutiny committees identified gaps in provision and connected immunisation services to children in need. Their additional powers mean health providers want to actively work with the committees and they, in turn, fulfil their role as community advocate.

Scrutiny committees are the only place you can bring together all the right people to address a particular issue without preexisting interests taking over.

Without local oversight there is no check and balance

It's easy to see how this could be extended to schools. Harnessing the potential of council scrutiny uses existing local expertise and an established system to fill a gap in accountability. It is also a role that councils undertook until recently and that some are continuing. But new formal scrutiny powers would provide clarity of roles, consistency of approach and give the necessary powers to councils and councillors to do this job well.

As with health scrutiny, it would need more teeth. For example, all schools (including academies and free schools) must be open and honest about their performance, to respond to requests for information, to collaborate locally and to demonstrate transparency.

Scrutiny of the school system would be about more than holding local providers to account – it would look at how, strategically, all the components work together; how the RSCs discharge their duties; how local partners coordinate activity, and, crucially, that all efforts are having a positive impact on pupils and communities. Good scrutiny is about adding value, strengthening decisions and outcomes.

The government's recent announcement that it was abandoning the academies bill was an important step in recognising that councils do have a continued role in schools and education. But it doesn't answer how councils will carry out this role in a mixed provider and accountability landscape. Overview and scrutiny should play a vital, positive role in the new governance architecture. **EDITION 83**

Until we make it acceptable to discuss race, the crucial conversations required to drive change will simply never happen, says Ndidi Okezie

ne of the barriers a black, Asian or ethnic minority (BAME) person stepping into a leadership position faces is that they are not taking on the weight of leadership purely for themselves – which we know is challenging enough – but the weight of being a trailblazer for their race and background. That is an entirely different responsibility to get your head around.

There doesn't seem to be a centralised national group leading the call for change in the way that WomenEd is leading the issue of gender in education leadership. In fact, race continues to be a far less-developed and "taboo" topic of conversation.

Recent discussions at WomenEd revealed that many people are reticent to talk about race, for fear of saying the wrong thing, or being labelled racist. Others simply think it's impolite to bring it up.

But the very omission of the topic is an offence itself. One of my biggest frustrations is that often when I am asked to sit on diversity panels, I am invited and interviewed only in my capacity as a woman.

I've sat through so many thorough, rich and engaging conversations about diversity in which nobody brings up race and it's left for me to raise it. The fact I am the one left to ask if anyone has noticed I'm also black and in the minority, makes



NDIDI OKEZIE Executive director of delivery, Teach First

We need to get over the 'taboo' of talking about race

me feel even more isolated

The lack of ethnic minorities in senior leadership roles is a serious issue; however, before identifying solutions and fixing the problem, we need to create safer spaces for real conversations about the issue. If you go back a couple of decades, I'm sure it was equally taboo to bring up gender. That has changed, thanks to the plethora of opportunities and forums where the conversation takes place. We need to give racial diversity that same journey.

To find out, as I have recently, that people hold back from speaking about race for fear of offending any ethnic minorities in the room, has been a real eye-opener for me; a revelation that has strangely provided some degree of comfort. The sense of isolation that can come from being "the only black person" or "the only black woman" in a room is common for me and so I am hungry for these conversations to take place. It is encouraging that non-BAME leaders also want to discuss it.

The truth is we don't have enough data or analysis of experiences to really know what the barriers are.

Who are the BAME people in education? We know the numbers are low, but who are the ones currently there? How many ethnic minority middle leaders do we even have in the system? Who is the pipeline, and where are they getting stuck?

The lack of a strong network, or visible role models, also prevents young and aspiring leaders of BAME backgrounds from putting

The very omission of the topic is an offence

themselves forward for leadership roles.

A group of Teach First ambassadors (alumni of the Teach First leadership development programme) has decided to address this lack of representation in education leadership head-on. They are launching a #TfAmbassadors BAME Network and hosting their first event, a town hall conversation, on Wednesday November 16 at Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy in Bromley, Kent. All are welcome.

Two things need to happen next. First, we need to organise, centralise and get hold of some reliable stats to start trying to work out why BAME people are underrepresented in education leadership. But alongside that, we ALL need to be bold enough to simply discuss this issue more. And to facilitate that, we must recognise that safe spaces for these conversation need to be created, making sure people know it's OK to be the one to raise the issue.

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REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Emma Mattinson-Hardy, former primary school teacher and union organiser @emmaannhardy

In years to come whenever you are asked a question that starts with, "In which year..." it's highly probable 2016 will be in the answer. In case you missed it, another trivia answer could be 2016 is also the year in which the ATL and NUT agreed to ballot all members over creating a new National Education Union!

As the education unions show signs of unifying, the government has abandoned its white paper *Education Excellence Everywhere*. It appears it has decided not to continue fighting a war on two fronts within its own party. As each political party still struggles to come to terms with the impact of Brexit, I wonder if it will be a quiet time for educational politics.

Politics and the school system @SocialistEdu

Last April, Nick Gibb, a minister at the DfE longer than anyone else since 2010, spoke of "a landmark speech in which Jim Callaghan in many ways set the direction of reform for the next four decades".

Forty years after this speech is a good time for us to debate how much information parents need about schools to hold them to account and have we all moved too far? "A new Great Debate is needed to check the pattern of English school development – which always reflect revolutionary changes driven by politicians at Westminster. Change is constant, from academies through free schools to grammar schools, and is always driven by the politics of whoever works in No 10. Whether this is tenable or sustainable is the issue to be discussed."

Pedagogical choices @nancygedge

The idea that there is only one way to teach, as some primary teachers believe, is worrying. Why would you teach handwriting in the same way that you teach art? In this blog Nancy Gedge highlights why we must retain our "good sense": "you have something that you want to teach your class, and then you think of an appropriate way to teach it to them.

"One of the interesting things about teaching many subjects is the different styles of teaching that you use. A group composition in music works well. Individual practice is the way to go with handwriting. Painting in the junior classroom demands the tables pushed together and children standing if they wish...We plan the lesson around the thing that is to be learned. It doesn't need to be complicated, and there certainly isn't any magic involved. Perhaps, just a little bit of professional confidence."

Just Google It @SueCowley

I remember being shown the internet for the first time when I was in the sixth form and it taking four hours at university to send the information to my printer. But one thing hasn't changed and that is the importance of teaching children to be sceptical about what they read. When mainstream daily newspaper headlines scream about the "greatest crisis since Churchill declared war", our children need to be able to judge the validity of reports such as this.

"The world is accelerating into something that is going to be very hard to deal with. And if we don't teach our children how to handle the storm that is brewing, we are doing them a disservice."

Let the Music Play..... @Mishwood1

Music brings colour to everything. When I was teaching I allowed my class to choose their "class song", which we sang as a reward for a hard day's work. The last class I taught chose the song "Lean on Me – Glee version" and it still makes me smile every time I hear it.

In this blog, Mishwood highlights all the different (and amazing) ways she uses music to bring joy into her school. "When I put the music on in school yesterday morning as I routinely do, I was thinking about...how much we use it for a range of reasons – perhaps even more in a special school than a mainstream setting. So my blog is an account of the different ways we use music and the positive impact it has with our pupils."

BOOKREVIEW

The Slightly Awesome Teacher Author Dominic Salles **Publisher** John Catt Educational **ISBN**-10 1911382020 **ISBN**-13 978-1911382027 **Reviewed by** Heidi Marke, maths teacher, teaching & learning leader



This hugely ambitious and passionate book attempts to distil educational research into simple practical tools to help every teacher achieve brilliant results without working any harder. All with a comforting, rather English, self-deprecating title and quotes from Arnold Schwarzenegger. It claims to be the "love child" of four hugely influential books by Doug Lemov, John Hattie, Jim Smith and Phil

Beadle, but more accessible and practical. A tall order and one that unfortunately, but not surprisingly, Dominic Salles fails to pull off.

A practical book to improve teaching needs to be easy to digest and result in impact during term time. I read this during the beginning of the school year and found it to be neither. It reads more like a series of opinionated blogs rather than a practical book with a coherent structure. Salles suggests you dip in and out, but the book builds on previous chapters so this doesn't always work.

I found it took a determined effort to find a small practical step to try out in my classroom. I'm really not convinced that writing entire revision guides, restructuring how a year group is entered for GCSE, changing the way pupil premium money is used and firing all your teaching assistants count. Although Salles makes some valid points and has some great and refreshingly controversial ideas, they are beyond the scope of a book written to make educational research accessible to classroom teachers.

Eventually, in a discussion of Hattie's concept of teacher "with-it-ness", he suggests using a colleague's technique of ignoring the worst two high-level disruptees and focusing your efforts on the most ambivalent four. This isn't new but a good practical reminder of the importance of building the critical mass towards focused learning. On my way to work the next day the technique has morphed into the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". In this particular, rather tricky, class there are three, not two, high-level disruptees that I affectionately refer to (in private obviously) as "The Evil Triad". The students are professionals; they have developed and honed their craft well.

Next lesson, I've identified my four. I invite the pupils in and get them settled doing Numeracy Ninjas in silence. The Evil Triad arrive fashionably late, as usual announcing their excuses and personal needs. I do my best to use non-verbal cues to get them settled without disturbing the other students, keeping an encouraging eye on the Four Horsemen. I ignore the



usual deflective stream about pens/toilet/drink/book and scan the room to check the behaviour of the Four only to find I've lost them – they've morphed and four others have taken their place – agh!! This repeats itself over the next couple of weeks until I can no longer remember using the technique.

Maybe the technique didn't stand a chance with this particular class. Will I use it again? Maybe, but mainly

I'm looking forward to refocusing on my original plan for my teaching this year – implementing techniques from Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion.

Furthermore, the Four Horsemen Technique is not actually from this book. It's something my mind invented whilst mulling over the chapter on classroom management. It's what I expected to find here, but is what I actually find (more easily) in the books that Salles claims to be influenced by. Disappointed, I flick to the end only to find a useful list that would have helped signpost and structure the book into the useful guide it purports to be.

So, should you read it? If you've never read any blogs or books on educational research, love a good old highly opinionated rant, then go for it. Otherwise, to read a practical guide on using research and cognitive science, try stuff from a chapter of Hattie and Yates Visible Learning & the Science of How We Learn; for an easily accessible and thought-provoking introduction to using cognitive science, read Dan Willingham's Why Don't Students Like School?: for a coherent list of clearly described practical techniques used by top teachers read Lemov and, if you want more easy to implement ideas than you can ever have time to try out, read Jim Smith's Outstanding Lazy Teaching.

Next week

Managing Teacher Workload Edited by Nansi Ellis Reviewed by Bansi Kara THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER

ast week, Sir Michael Wilshaw sent a stern letter to headteachers who failed to stop a mass fight among pupils at their four schools. The leaders ought to have got wind of the event and intervened, he said. It wasn't always this way though; at one point in time schools literally taught children how to have a punch-up.

Until the 1960s, boxing was often taught in schools. Over at flashbak.com – a website that gathers fabulous images of the past – you can find images of young boys in a Lambeth street thumping each other with boxing gloves (which, incidentally, were invented by Jack Broughton who opened the first boxing school in London in the 1700s).

The site explains how boxing was once fashionable in schools, but dropped out of favour in 1962. Why?

Many news stories from around the mid-2000s suggest it was because boxing was banned in schools but this isn't actually true, as the flashbak article notes.

It was, however, affected by the Boxing Bill, a series of proposals brought to parliament by Labour MP Edith Summerskill, who wanted to ban boxing altogether.

Digging into parliamentary records reveals a marvellous debate in the Lords, where the issue of boxing in schools was brought to the fore.

Viscount Scarsdale (the Second) fondly talked of being trained in boxing from the age of nine and continuing his training

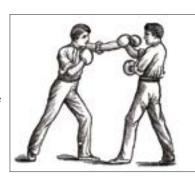


BOXING HAS NEVER BEEN BANNED IN SCHOOLS

LAURA MCINERNEY

while at Eton and in the Army. He scoffed at the idea of a potential for harm "because, my Lords, in the Army, in universities and in schools, three rounds are the limit".

Lord Auckland (less glamorously known as Ian Eden) also spoke highly of learning boxing at school and referenced an unusual benefit of the sport.



"It is a particularly useful sport for young people, and when two boys get into a scrap it seems to me an excellent idea to put them into the boxing ring. Certainly at the school which I attended for some five years that was done, and any occasions of bullying were treated likewise. On a number of occasions the bully was put into the ring with the school boxing instructor, and to my recollection he did not bully again."

Such was the force of these arguments, the bill was never passed and yet, somehow, it appears a belief arose that boxing in schools had been banned. Various websites claim it was because the sport was dropped from the national curriculum; but there was no national curriculum in 1962.

Records also reveal that in 1966, then education secretary Anthony Crosland was asked if the Inspectorate of Physical Education had issued a circular advising education authorities in London to ban the teaching of boxing to school children because of possible physical injuries.

A curt answer came back: "There has been no such circular."

Asked next if he would advise against the sport, an even more curt answer is recorded: "No."

Thus, boxing was never banned, but it dropped out of favour in PE lessons, with boys instead pushed to take part in extra-curricular boxing clubs, which have fluctuated in popularity over the years. In 2007, England's boxing association (it changes its name a lot) put cash and marketing behind a new push to boost the sport, which reportedly increased participation by a third, although the British Medical Association seemed quite distressed at the time and put out statements saying it would prefer it to be banned altogether.



A week in Westminster Your regular guide to what's going on in central government

THURSDAY:

It is with a heavy heart we must announce that Michael Wilshaw did not make any big pronouncements this week.

Oh wait.

In the latest instalment of "soon-to-beretired Ofsted boss refuses to go quietly", Wilsh intervened in a school fight. Really.

After writing to four London heads, criticising them for failing to foresee a brawl between pupils on September 19, he was criticised by one person we spoke to as being a megalomaniac.

The schools, meanwhile, issued a polite statement, but leaders are understood to be quietly fuming behind closed doors.

FRIDAY:

Congratulations to the now even more honourable Nick Gibb on his appointment as an adviser to the Queen.

The schools minister's appointment to the Privy Council – that's the monarch's official board of advisers that rules on things such as the appointment of Ofsted chief inspectors – was announced last week to little fanfare.

In practice, the appointment means he is now one of more than 650 politicians, heads of state and other dignitaries entitled to attend council meetings and use "The Right Honourable" in front of his name. The prime minister's office would not confirm the reasons for his appointment, but ministers are typically selected in recognition of long service or commitment to a particular cause.

In Gibb's case, the cause in question is probably phonics.

SATURDAY:

The NUT and ATL finally committed to a ballot of their members over plans to form a new "superunion", which will be aptly named NEU, the National Education Union. Assuming that only a handful of disgruntled members of the more moderate ATL will gurn at marching with their more strike-prone comrades at the NUT, the new union could have more than 450,000 members, which, with the catchy new name, will make it a considerable new campaigning force in the world of education.

TUESDAY:

After his happy day of joining the privy council, Nick Gibb was grilled by MPs on the evidence for grammars.

Given the chair of the committee published a blog the night before saying he didn't believe there was any evidence for selection at 11, it was a tough gig.

But, a piece of research produced in 2008 by the Sutton Trust, has become a regular go-to for the likes of Justine Greening and Nick Gibb when asked to make the case for more grammar schools.

The education secretary told parliament earlier this year that the research "identified improved attainment by children on free school meals in grammar schools" and showed "no negative impact on the attainment of children outside the grammar school system".

Gibb repeated these claims at the select committee this week.

However, Barry Sheerman, the Labour MP and former chair of the committee, said at an event later in the day that he was "sick to death of ministers in this government quoting Sutton Trust research out of context and selectively".

We can't be certain which ministers he's referring to, but Nick Gibb was sitting almost directly opposite him.

WEDNESDAY:

PING! As the national funding formula consultation is still missing in action (though we have been told its publication will definitely be before Christmas) an email from the parliamentary accounts committee dropped into our inbox telling us that the financial sustainability of schools is going under the magnifying glass as part of a planned inquiry by the group next year.

The group of watchdog MPs is yet to announce its reasons for such an inquiry, but the announcement is timely, coming soon after Justine Greening confirmed a measly 1 per cent rise in teacher pay for next year.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

SCHOOLS WEEK

School Bulletin with Sam King



with Ash Goodinson, one of the project organisers on piano

College launches a Christmas single

tudents and staff at Blackpool sixth form college have produced their own Christmas track to raise awareness of child poverty.

Students and staff composed A Christmas Miracle, which will be sold on iTunes for 79p to raise money for The Children's Society.

Ten schools from across the Fylde coast of Lancashire took part in the recording this year and will appear in an accompanying video that was filmed at the college earlier this month.

Local businesses in the area have also pledged their support, offering audio

equipment and logistical assistance.

College music tutors Ash Goodinson and John Stevens, who are coordinating the project, said they have been

"overwhelmed" by the level of community involvement.

The focus on child poverty has particular relevance in Blackpool, where the percentage of children living in poverty is 30.6 per cent compared with a national average of 21.4 per cent, according to Public

Health England. The song and video will be released on December 1.



Teach First's innovation awards for 2017

ducation charity Teach First is now accepting applicants for its Teach First innovation award, which will give up to five social entrepreneurs a six-month, full-time salary of £15,000, allowing them to focus on their ideas to tackle educational inequality.

The charity will also provide winners with 12 months of support, including technical training, supportive mentoring and expert advice.

Since the awards launched in 2012, 15 winners have received a total of £175,000

FEATURED

to develop their enterprises.

Previous winners include Future Frontiers (pictured), who helped to develop the career aspirations of disadvantaged young people through one-to-one coaching and mentoring from university undergraduates.

An open day about the award will be held on November 17 at Bloomberg's offices in Finsbury Square, central London.

Alternatively, would-be applicants can visit teachfirst.org.uk/InnovationAward for more details.

Purr-fect installation for Cambridge school

school in Cambridge has commissioned an art installation in the form of a virtual cat to teach students about science and sustainability.

Trumpington community college commissioned a team of digital artists to create Cinder, a mixed-reality architectural interface.

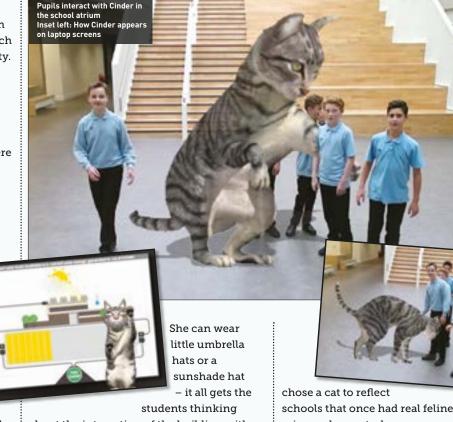
She can change size and appears on a screen in the school's main atrium, where she interacts with students, staff and quests

She also randomly appears on laptops and tablets around the school, with pupils having the option of feeding her, depending on how much energy the school has produced from its solar panels or they can shoo her away.

Cinder took two years to develop, and was designed to help pupils understand the school's sustainable technology. She changes mood depending on data use in the building.

John Jones, Trumpington's headteacher, explains: "The cat is linked to the data within the building such as our energy and water use, so its mannerisms reflect the way the building is feeling. If we're low on energy, the cat gets lazy and doesn't want to play.

"Cinder also wears different hats depending on what the weather is like.



about the interaction of the building with the weather, if more heating is required and what impact that has on the school's use of energy."

Students worked alongside a team of designers and coders from tech company Umbrellium during a series of workshops held to design the installation. They

schools that once had real felines to keep mice under control

Jones added: "We wanted to do something slightly different really, not just have a picture on the wall or a sculpture, but something that was going to evolve over time and that the students would be able to interact with.

"It's all incredibly clever stuff."

A WRITE ON THE TILES IN OXFORDSHIRE

The renovation of a primary school roof was transformed into a community event when past and present students wrote personalised messages on its new roof tiles.

More than 100 people turned up to sign a tile at Witney community primary school in Oxfordshire, including staff, parents and grandparents of pupils, who attended the school themselves as children.

Signatories paid £1 for a tile, autographed it and then passed it back to the builder, who attached it to the roof.

The event raised £106 for the Friends of Witney community primary school group, which will reinvest the money in the school through group activities and new equipment. Jill Meyer, Witney's headteacher, said:

"Some pupils drew pictures, staff did it and I signed one. It's a nice thing that at some point in the future, probably not in my lifetime, they will take them down and see lots of names and dates of birth and children's pictures on them.

"The school was built in 1938 so I don't know how much longer it will stand as a building but the whole roof will still be there, that's for sure."



Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

Desi McKeown

James Wetz has been appointed as an ambassador and educational consultant to the board at Bristol Steiner school. His appointment follows his review of the school's governance, management and administration.

He will take up the role alongside his position as non-executive director of Learning Partnership West, a not-for-profit organisation that sets up small schools for young people who are excluded from school.

At Bristol Steiner he will be responsible for helping the school to reposition itself to "appeal to a wider public".

"The Steiner movement hasn't really trumpeted and voiced its strengths to the wider community, so that's part of what I'm being encouraged to do.

"People need to understand it's a school that seeks to know its children and know them well."

Wetz has worked in state education for more than 30 years, and is known for his Channel 4 Dispatches programme, The Children Left Behind, which he wrote and presented. Wetz also wrote Urban Village Schools: Putting Relationships at the Heart of Secondary School, a book that explores the impact of large schools on children.



James Wetz

Desi McKeown has been appointed

permanent headteacher of the Deanes school in Essex, following a stint as interim head. He joined the school in 2004 as a maths teacher, working his way up to head of maths, assistant head and acting head, before his permanent appointment.

McKeown played a key role when the school faced closure in 2013, preparing reports and evidence for its viability, such as budgets, projections for pupil numbers, and exam results.

"I see myself as in a position where I can actually start to change the perception of the school externally, but also internally."



Kate Chhatwal

He remains "adamant" that he will maintain its community feel. "We want to give parents a real alternative to the bigger schools in the area. We can provide an education just as well, but do it in a much more personalised way.

"We've only got 600 pupils so we can know every single member of our student population."

Kate Chhatwal has been appointed director of the Southwark Teaching School Alliance

(STSA), which brings together a broad group of schools and other educational institutions in the London borough to improve the experience of pupils and teachers through teacher training and development.

She will continue as co-founder of the Leading Women's Alliance, which works to encourage and empower more women to take up headships and executive leadership positions.

For the past three years, Chhatwal has worked as chief programme officer at The Future Leaders Trust, where she oversaw the design and delivery of senior leadership development programmes. She worked at the Department of Education for more than ten years before joining the trust.

Speaking of her new role, she said: "I am looking forward to working with and drawing on the unique strengths and varied expertise of schools and partners across the borough.

"I also want to ensure that the evidence and expertise we develop is shared with schools across the country, at the same time ensuring we have access to the very best practice from elsewhere."

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

			9		4	8			Difficulty:
8				3		2	1		EASY
5			8			9		4	
					7		8		
7	5						9	3	
	6		3						
3		2			1			8	
	1	4		6				2	
		5	4		3				

									Difficulty:
5			8	2		3			MEDIUM
							7		
			4	3			2	5	
1	6	9					3	2	
		5		1		6			
3	8					5	1	7	
8	2			9	6				
	5								
		1		5	2			3	Solutions:
			•			•			Next week

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Last Week's solutions

			1			5		
	7	3				8	1	
4			8		7			2
		9		7	8			
6			3	2	9			5
			4	5		6		
3			7		4			8
	5	6				4	7	
		4			5			

Difficulty: EASY

1	8	7	6	3	4	2	5	9
4	3	5	1	7	9	1	8	6
6	9	2	8	5	1	3	4	7
5	2	8	1	6	3	7	9	4
3	4	1	5	9	7	6	2	8
9	7	6	4	8	2	5	3	1
2	6	9	7	4	5	8	1	3
8	1	3	9	2	6	4	7	5
7	5	4	3	1	8	9	6	2

Difficulty: MEDIUM <image>

Spot five differences. First correct entry wins a mug. Tweet a picture of your completed spot the difference using @schoolsweek in the tweet.